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SPEECH

OF

HON. CHAS. D. MARTIN, OF OHIO,

ON THE

SLAVERY QUESTION.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 19, 1860.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—Mr. MARTIN, of Ohio, said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I propose this morning to submit to the attention of the committee a few observations on the anomalous condition of the country. On the one side we behold our fellow-citizens and neighbors of the South arming themselves for *self-defence*, against their brethren and fellow-citizens of the North. They contemplate with complacency the uncertainties and calamities of disunion as a refuge from existing and impending evils in the Union. On the other side we behold the free and prosperous people of the North arrayed by large majorities in sectional combinations against the people of the South; and in many localities in the non-slaveholding States associations of men are formed and sustained in contemptuous defiance of the Federal authority, in all instances affecting the constitutional guarantees of slavery. They interrupt and defeat the execution of constitutional laws; and, both by mob violence and judicial prostitution, they obstruct and frustrate the process of United States courts, and the precepts of the United States Senate. The prejudices and jealousies of the constituencies have been transferred to the Representative Chambers in this Capitol. On this very floor, sir, where daily assemble the popular Representatives of the Confederacy, distrust and alienation multiply, and each recurring scene threatens to culminate in collision and violence.

The riot at Harper's Ferry a few months since is commonly considered as the principal cause for this unhappy state of the public mind. But I apprehend that little importance would be attached to that disturbance, unaccompanied by the circumstances of preparation and encouragement to their plans of murder and desolation and the public demonstrations of sympathy for the *cause* in which the unfortunate culprits lost their lives. No greater mistake can be made than to impute to any considerable

number of the people of the non-slaveholding States the slightest sympathy for that murderous adventure. Such sympathy was not necessary for its occurrence, nor can it be obtained for its repetition. Those marauders were doubtless encouraged by the unpatriotic teachings of the leaders of the self-styled Republican party. For that party has notoriously and unblushingly employed every epithet of disparagement, and every form of misrepresentation of the people and institutions of the slaveholding States. Its orators and press have been too successful in their efforts to incense the great mass of the party with bitter hostility toward their confederate brethren of the South. And, alas! too often has religious fanaticism been invoked and the sacred office debased in fomenting strife and discontent under the wholesome restraint of existing laws. The thorough investigation now being prosecuted before the Senate committee, will, in my judgment, undoubtedly show that of the teeming millions of the North but a very insignificant and irresponsible number were actually implicated in that raid. Nevertheless, sir, the offence was of the gravest character.

The States of this Union, in the formation of the Confederacy, deposed, to a very material extent, the character and functions of independent sovereignties, and invested the central Government with the duty and power of protecting each and all the States. By the terms of the constitutional compact, the States voluntarily deprived themselves of the power to lay duties and keep troops or ships of war in time of peace. These high qualities of sovereignty are solely conferred on the General Government; and the privileges of citizenship are extended and guaranteed alike to all the citizens of the Confederacy. The General Government is thus wisely adapted and fully capable to protect and defend the people of the several States from foreign invasion. But the main protection afforded to the people of one State against invasions and incursions by the people of another, is the sense of justice and fraternal duty which has hitherto been all-sufficient. Yet, sir, it is undoubtedly clear that if the people of any section of the country are constantly annoyed by such murderous raids as the one to which I have alluded, the very ends of government will be defeated. The sanctity of home, the security of life, liberty, and the protection of property, are the legitimate ends of all good government. Every citizen is entitled to the reasonable assurance of these great rights. He is entitled to enjoy, peaceably and without fear of molestation, the fruits of his labor and the comforts of home, under his own vine and fig-tree.

The outrage at Harper's Ferry, and the frequent incursions into the border slaveholding States for the purpose of stealing and running off their slave property, are not only flagrant violations of the private rights of the persons injured, but are also public crimes of the most serious import. If such unwarrantable transactions are persisted in, the direst political calamities will inevitably ensue. It can, in the end, be of little practical consequence

to the sufferers, whether their safety and security are imperiled and their property lost, through the agency of entire communities, or occasional predatory bands of Abolitionists. The injury is the same. And if such infamous practices involve the country in revolution, the most lamentable consideration attending the disaster will be that it was precipitated, notwithstanding the protest, and contrary to the hopes and aspirations of the vast majority of the people.

It is far from my design to say that a few marauders can, unaided, effect such calamitous results. A well-controlled and well-directed public opinion in a country like ours is irresistible. It is more powerful than armies. Under its searching ken, such combinations would never assemble; such depredations would never escape punishment. But, sir, a public opinion that grudgingly yields its assent to the full and honest discharge of constitutional obligations, a public opinion that resorts to technical evasions, and justifies miserable quibbles, in order that confessed guilt may go unpunished—such a public opinion is a poor shield to the citizen and a poor barrier to the transgressor. And can it be denied that among masses of the people of the North such a public opinion prevails? Witness the illegal annoyances and frequent rioting that attends every effort of the master to secure the reclamation of his fugitive slave, pursuant to the laws and the Constitution. How irksome have become the restraints of law! How grievous the weight of constitutional obligations! How strong the disposition to relieve the odium of crime, by ascribing to it the sanctions of morality! Nothing, sir, is more common than the apology of “higher law” for flagrant political crimes and the embarrassment of the judicial and executive officers of the land. Nothing is clearer than that such apologies are insincerely and hypocritically made, for the worst and most demagogical purposes. For the most part, the persons who advance such views are well advised of the fallacy of their application to the laws and institutions of this Government. Ignorance and fanaticism may excuse those who are deceived by such teachings; but the sober judgment of the people must arraign the treasonable instigators of discontent, disloyalty, and rebellion, and visit upon them the execration they so richly deserve.

Mr. Chairman, I have the highest respect—nay, admiration—for the man, howsoever much he may err in judgment, who refuses his assent and obedience to laws from honest convictions of moral duty—whilst his hand refuses obedience, his neck is bowed to receive the penalty. Heaven favors this scheming world with no sublimer spectacle. But, sir, there breathes no more insidious and dangerous enemy to the public peace than he who, employing the hopes and fears of religion, inflames his fellow-citizens with the spirit of resistance to the laws and Constitution of their country. An ambition that would accept such a ladder to promotion is of the lowest and worst type. A party led on by such men, and animated with such a spirit, cannot long exist in a con-

stitutional Republic. Is it not much to be feared that the Republic could not long survive the ascendancy of such a party?

Mr. Chairman, I have already indicated that the dangerous and anomalous condition of the country is not attributable to any one cause or transaction. It is the result of many, extending through a period of years, to which, in my judgment, both the great sections have contributed. Impartial history will show that the harvest of sectional animosities, which now unhappily fills the whole land, had a seed-time correspondingly extensive.

It is not my design, nor would the limits prescribed by the rules of the House allow me, to enter into an extended discussion, or even enumeration of these causes. To well-grounded continuing causes of excitement and irritation, I propose to invite the attention of the committee. And, sir, I would premise my remarks on this subject with the observation, that serious danger is not to be apprehended from the full discussion of any of the measures favored by either party. Just apprehension of trouble cannot arise, either from the discussion or practical disposition of any such measures. No scheme of policy is now contemplated that has not heretofore been subjected to severe criticism in Congress and before the country, and been happily arranged.

The great variety of questions relative to the constitutional powers of Congress over States and Territories; the right of the master to the reclamation of his fugitive slave, and the manner of enforcing it; the spoliation of slave property by State action; the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and other similar subjects, are not new or untried in our political history. It is true that the discussion of these great questions was always characterized by great zeal, and sometimes with intemperance. But it is equally true that our experience shows that there is nothing in the intrinsic character of these subjects that places them beyond the pale of judicious settlement, or that renders an improper disposition of them intolerable. And that experience is fully sustained by the practical workings of the Federal system so well adapted to provide against inconsiderate and unjust legislation, and to protect each citizen and State from its evil consequences. The careful disposition of legislative powers in two Houses of Congress, so differently constituted, and the supervisory and veto powers of the Executive combined, have proved eminently satisfactory. To this is superadded the judicial department, fully charged with the power and duty to protect the citizen from any invasion, even by Congress itself, of his constitutional rights. Rarely, indeed, can a measure of rank injustice pass these ordeals. There have been instances of impolitic legislation approved by them; but redress has always been found in "the sober second thought of the people." This deliberate public opinion is the final and most impartial arbiter. It underlies and pervades all our institutions. Notwithstanding the checks and balances of our political machinery, the entire system rests upon and is controlled by the omnipotent arm of the people. Temporary delusions may

involve them in passion and trouble. The Government itself may be wrecked in an hour of rashness and gloom. But, sir, the American people, having no selfish ends to attain, and gratefully appreciating the blessings bestowed by the Republic, with every hope and aspiration centering in the welfare of posterity, will ever as formerly, under the inspiration of "the sober second thought," vindicate their title to self-government by the impartial administration of their written Constitution. I repeat, then, that there are no measures proposed, or likely to be proposed, that may not safely and satisfactorily be disposed of, or against the evils of which ample provision is not made.

Whence, then, the hourly-coming portents of internal trouble and disaster? From issues of quite a different sort. They come from the issues of sectional animosity unhappily joined between confederated States and brethren. These are the issues of sectional pride and jealousy. Each section charges the other with sinister and unfriendly designs. Crimination and recrimination are the order of the day. It is this fell spirit of partisan rancor and sectional hate that for two months delayed the organization of this House, amid scenes of disgraceful disorder, paralyzing the most important branch of the Government. Sir, no human government has ever provided a remedy for disputes like these. For differences of judgment, civil remedies abound; but for deep-seated jealousies and animosities between States and people, there is no appeal but to the sword.

Mr. Chairman, in this critical emergency every dictate of patriotism points to a single duty—the duty of mutual forbearance. We must rise superior to the trammels of party. We must discard local prejudices, and regard with affection and brotherly kindness the men and interests of every section. Otherwise, the clouds which now lower over our heads, and the darkness that surrounds us, will settle down, in a night that has no dawn, on the most perfect system of free government ever baptized by the blood of patriotism, or favored with the smiles of an all-wise Providence.

I have alluded to the general disinclination in most of the free States to respect and enforce the constitutional guarantees relative to slavery. This, in many instances, has amounted to riotous resistance to the execution of the laws by the constituted authorities. But, sir, the mischief has not been confined to the irregular movements of mobs. Since the formation of the Republican party, every non-slaveholding State under its control has, by the most deliberate forms of legislative action, obstructed the execution of the Federal laws, and, in many instances, practically nullified them. Nor is this all. Some of these States have made obedience to the laws of Congress, passed in strict pursuance to the Constitution, a criminal offence.

I will not detain the committee with a detailed statement of the various personal liberty bills, disabling acts, and penal statutes constituting the black catalogue. They are matters of noto-

riety. Some few of these States, it is true, having first recanted Republicanism, have repealed the obnoxious acts. The enormity of these legislative outrages is very great. If we consider the Constitution in no higher light than a mere treaty between the States, its deliberate and repeated violation would involve a taint of dishonor. Such conduct between independent nations would nullify a treaty, and lead to war. But the Constitution of the United States is higher than a treaty. It is not only a league of union, but a form of government over the States united by it. It is the result of concession and compromise, and the honor and faith of each State and citizen are pledged to its sacred maintenance. The unhappy resort of war that avails between independent nations is not redress for an injured State or section of this Confederacy. Such a resort would not be war, but revolution, anarchy, and mutual destruction. It would not be the assertion of rights by one Government against another, but the annihilation of a common Government. Every consideration attending the subject adds to the gravity of these transactions, and correspondingly demands for them the indignant reprobation of the people. They are existing causes of just complaint and irritation. They are high crimes and offences against the peace of the Republic and the Constitution of the Union.

I am aware, sir, that various pretexts are interposed in excuse of these flagrant wrongs. At one time we are informed that the Constitution is repugnant to the law of God, and therefore is not to be obeyed. Again, the sage conclusion is attained that the various laws effectuating the constitutional guarantees of slavery are themselves unconstitutional. The fugitive slave law of 1850 has been peculiarly obnoxious to both these objections. It is against that law that the various disloyal enactments to which I have alluded have been mainly directed. Suffice it to say in this connection, that the fugitive law of 1850 differs in no material respect from its predecessor, the law of 1793. Every objection of a constitutional character that can be urged against the former, applies with equal cogency to the latter. These laws have, time and again, been affirmed, and their constitutional validity attested by the highest judicial tribunals in the country. During the long period of time in which these statutes have been in operation, as well in periods of repose and quiet, as in times of excitement and animosity, their constitutionality has been fully sustained by every State court in the Union where the question has been raised, with possibly the single exception of the court of Wisconsin. Surely, sir, if any legal proposition can be considered settled by the weight of authority and precedent, the one under examination should be forever at rest. Even if it were a doubtful question, no one could for a moment justify the infamous and revolutionary resistance employed by the Republican party of the free States. Resistance by violence and counter-State legislation is not the remedy afforded by our free Government for injudicious, or even unconstitutional, legislation by Congress. Much less can such



opposition be justified in cases of doubtful constitutionality. The opportunities and means of redress are ample. The shield of the judicial department is ever extended over the citizen and the State, protecting their rights and redressing their wrongs. If one Congress will not afford the remedy of repeal for an unjust and obnoxious statute, another Congress assembled in a brief period, by the unbought suffrages of freemen, certainly will. But if courts and Congress and people all persist in maintaining both the expediency and the constitutionality of any legislation, a becoming modesty would seem to require from the minority a distrust of their own judgment. At least, sir, duty demands their obedience and submission.

The responsibility of the Republican party for these various aggressions is generally assumed and justified by its leaders and members; yet in some conservative portions of the North, that responsibility is denied. The most innocent and patriotic motives are claimed for it. That party, sir, like the chameleon, confessedly of a tawny color, possesses the remarkable property of changing its hue as interest may require. Look at the humiliating spectacle its Representatives have exhibited on this floor. An honorable colleague, (Mr. CORWIN,) who occupies an exalted position in that party, and whose eminent abilities and public services would entitle him to a high rank in any party honored by his association, has not only declared he would respect and enforce existing laws on the subject of slavery, but that, in certain contingencies, he would favor a slave code for a Territory. Other honorable colleagues are so deeply and piously impressed with the exceeding sinfulness of slavery, that language fails to express their abhorrence of the institution. They denounce existing laws, and are furiously opposed to the spread or continuance of slavery. Sir, the political dialect of the Republican representation on this floor from Ohio is more confused and discordant than the tongues of Babel when smitten by Divine vengeance.

Prominent among the unfavorable indications of the present day is the wide-spread and industrious effort of that sectional party to bring into disrepute and odium the judicial officers of the country. That department, from the formation of the Government to the present time, has had the firmest hold upon the affections and reverence of the entire people, and has been justly regarded as their chief bulwark against aggressions from every quarter. History will award to the Republican party the unenviable distinction of striking the first blow at the Federal judiciary, and of inaugurating the first concerted movement to undermine their just authority as guardians of the constitutional rights of the States and the people.

The disloyalty thus manifested, however, is scarcely less reprehensible than the malice disclosed in the attacks made against the eminent jurists constituting the most august legal tribunal in the country, if not in the world. Advanced years and long lives of spotless purity and eminent public service should have availed

to protect them from the imputation of sinister and wicked motives. But sectional animosity assails with indiscriminate fury every barrier that obstructs the consummation of its unholy purposes. But, sir, when pressed by considerations of the impropriety and disloyalty of these disgraceful and revolutionary proceedings, the more wary and prudent of the leaders of the Republican party put in a general denial. They refer us to the Philadelphia platform as the only authoritative exposition of the views and purposes of their party. I certainly have no desire to misrepresent their views or conduct. Nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to acquit them entirely of all complicity in the high-handed treason that has, under the domination of that party, usurped the legislative control of thirteen free States in the manner already indicated. We can and do most cheerfully relieve them from entire culpability for the irregularities and occasional outrages of mobs, and excited and extravagant declarations of leading men. But the deliberate refusal of Republican States, by their executive officers, to return fugitives from justice—parties implicated in the murderous and treasonable riot and conspiracy at Harper's Ferry, and the treasonable State legislation, practically nullifying, as far as possible, the laws and Constitution of the Union, are acts for which the Republican party are most unquestionably responsible. We judge the tree by its fruits. We judge men by their acts. And the trite maxim that "actions speak louder than words," is applicable to men in their collective as well as their individual capacity. That good professions shall excuse bad conduct, is a sham too transparent for deception. No, sir; the success of the Republican party will carry with it an indorsement of all those high-handed proceedings, villainous State legislation, and multiplied infractions of the Federal compact. But, in their platform they aver that it is both the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories. "No more slave States" is the familiar catch-word of the party; and the burden of nearly all their legislative and other deliberate resolves on the subject. The argument on the powers of Congress over this subject in the Territories has been exhausted. It has been everywhere argued with great ability; and I do not propose to add a single word.

The question at variance between the great parties of the country involves not only the power of Congress, but the expediency of exercising it. The ends of good government may be defeated by the improper and injudicious exercise of power, as well as by its usurpation, though the latter is the most dangerous. The history of the country is full of instruction on this subject. Whilst Congress, in some instances, undertook to prohibit the introduction of slavery by law, yet it was in such cases and such peculiar circumstances as to have elicited but little opposition. And in other instances, of varying circumstances, it tolerated its introduction and existence in the most marked manner. On the one hand, we find the ordinance of 1787, containing the

famous prohibitory clause, applied by virtue of the compact with Virginia to the then Territory northwest of the river Ohio. On the other hand, we find that same ordinance applied by Congress to Mississippi and other Territories, with the prohibitory clause significantly omitted.

The enactment of the Missouri compromise tolerated slavery south, and prohibited it north of a given line. Texas was annexed with a slaveholding constitution, and with certain stipulations as to slavery in new States to be erected out of her territory. The prohibitory clause was included in the organic act for Oregon, where no one then thought of ever introducing slavery.

But the entire subject of the right and propriety of congressional intervention came under review in 1850, when Congress was called upon to provide territorial governments for the vast possessions then newly acquired from Mexico. The agitation and excitement attending that discussion are memorable. To the mighty intellects and the unquestioned patriotism of the giant statesmen who participated in that congressional struggle are we chiefly indebted for its eminently wise and satisfactory settlement. Subsequent congressional legislation for Territories was predicated on the principles of the compromise measures of 1850. The main provision on the subject of slavery, incorporated into the compromise of 1850, is that each Territory, when admitted as a State, "shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of admission." This is the principle of popular sovereignty applied to all those Territories.

It will be observed that, during the whole history of the slavery agitation, the avowed doctrine of the Republican party, of "no more slave States," and of "the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories," is not recognized, but time and again repudiated.

It was the custom of the wise legislators who in former times controlled the political destinies of the country, to regard the subject of slavery with extreme caution and prudence, and to dispose of it as it unavoidably presented itself, in a spirit of fraternity and concession. Climate, productions of the soil, and manifest views of interest, generally, if not invariably, controlled its disposition. In pursuit of this policy not a single slave State has ever been erected out of territory free when our Government acquired it. At the same time, the people interested in and surrounded by the institution have felt no inconvenience for want of territorial expansion. Sometimes, it is true, storms of excitement broke over the country, awakening serious alarm; yet pacific counsels and fraternal sentiments invariably harmonized conflicting views and reconciled apparently conflicting interests.

The acquisitions from Mexico were so vast, and the excitement on the subject of slavery so intense, that the great and good men of that day established and applied the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which I have quoted, as an arbitrary but eminently

just and patriotic rule. The chief merit of this doctrine consisted in removing, as it was hoped, the agitation of the subject from these Halls. It is the true doctrine of popular sovereignty. It respects the equality of the States. It recognizes the right of self-government—the right of the people of every State, new or old, to form and fashion their own institutions in their own way. This, sir, is the paramount idea that pervades and distinguishes the American Confederacy. It was proposed to apply the prohibitory doctrine; but its injustice was manifest. The Territories were acquired by the gallantry, blood, and treasure of both sections. Especially had the South contributed liberally and lavishly; and the North did not insist on the unjust and inequitable claim of excluding the South. The people, and the States generally, acquiesced in this arrangement. But, since then, the present Republican party has, at a single bound, sprung into giant proportions. Its sole avowed object is to undo what has been so wisely done—to open up and set at naught a settlement that gave peace to a distracted country; to substitute the odious doctrine of congressional prohibition in the stead of the great doctrine of State sovereignty, approved and sustained at the time by Clay, Cass, Webster, Ewing, and a host of other patriot statesmen, most of whom, in this brief interval, have gone to their last reward.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic party of the Union, with a view to foster and perpetuate the amicable relations secured by the compromise measures of 1850, have ever since determined to maintain them in good faith. The only course left open to effect this policy was the adoption and maintenance of the doctrine of non-intervention. That doctrine was expressed in the Cincinnati platform in the words, “non-interference by Congress with slavery in State and Territory, or in the District of Columbia.” Experience and discussion have served to vindicate the justice of this great principle, and have rendered it inestimably dear to the conservative masses of the nation. The claims of justice and the Constitution are abundantly satisfied with it. Left alone to be impartially administered by the people immediately interested, no just cause of complaint will ever arise, and the rights and honor of no portion of the Confederacy will be invaded.

But, sir, I should not have detained the committee with a single word on this feature of the party platform, were it not for the demand, recently and persistently made, of a surrender of this principle. Let gentlemen remember that it is the result of compromise and concession, both in its application to existing legislation and its adoption in our party platform. Its abandonment now will release all parties to the arrangement; sectionalize and virtually dissolve the last remaining political association, whose policy and organization comprehend the interests and men of every State and section. This slavery agitation is the bane of our peace. I deprecate it everywhere, in the party and out of it. It is the rock that rises in the direct line of our progress, and gathers the dark mantle of false security around it. If our ship

of State, freighted with the hopes of unborn millions, and with a destiny brilliant beyond conception, founder and go down beneath the waves, to rise no more, history will point to that hated rock as at once the cause and monument of the disaster.

I do not pretend to say that the Territories are beyond the control and just regulation of Congress. The unfortunate history of Kansas abounds in instances of wise and expedient intervention on the part of Congress. Such intervention, both as a matter of principle and expediency, should never be resorted to except in extreme cases. In instances of fraud and tumult, in cases of invasions and corruptions of the ballot-box, it may become, as it has been, necessary and proper for Congress to apply the corrective.

It may, indeed, happen, in our territorial administration, that circumstances and combinations may be so ordered, by design and fraud, as to defeat the manifest will of the people, and destroy the constitutional rights of the citizen. In such cases, I repeat, extreme in their character, and of very unfrequent occurrence, Congress may be compelled to interfere. But they are exceptions. Non-intervention is the rule. The views of the great statesman of South Carolina on this subject possess, at this time, a peculiar interest. Devotedly attached to the constitutional Union, and fully appreciating that its preservation could only be secured by maintaining the equality of the States, his utterances are entitled to preëminent consideration. From his speech on the Oregon bill, delivered in the Senate on 27th June, 1848, I quote:

“But I go further, and hold that justice and the Constitution are the easiest and safest ground on which the question can be settled, regarded in reference to party. *It may be settled on that ground simply by non-action*—by leaving the Territories free and open to the emigration of all the world so long as they continue so; and when they become States, to adopt whatever constitution they please, with the single restriction to be republican, in order to their admission into the Union. If a party cannot safely take this broad and solid position, and successfully maintain it, what other can it take and maintain? If it cannot maintain itself by an appeal to the great principles of justice, the Constitution, and self-government, to what other sufficiently strong in public opinion can they appeal? I greatly mistake the character of the people of this Union if such an appeal would not prove successful, if either party should have the magnanimity to step forward and boldly make it. It would, in my opinion, be received with shouts of approbation by the patriotic and intelligent in every quarter.”

These views, so preëminent for their justice and wisdom, were adopted and applied in the legislation of 1850, and were accepted with the most signal approval by the entire Confederacy.

But, having directed attention to the aggressive acts and unconstitutional principles of the Republican party, I desire the indulgence of the committee for a few moments in disclosing the further and disloyal purposes that it entertains. When first organized, it professed no other object than to prevent injurious results apprehended from the repeal of the Missouri compromise. Fair play for Kansas was its chief theme. Emboldened by the success attending its efforts at organization, it displayed the most

intense animosity toward our brethren of the South. In their Philadelphia platform they declared it was "both the right and imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery;" thus disclosing hostile feelings to the South, and adding insult to injury by the association, in the same denunciatory ban, of the institution of slavery with the infamous crime of polygamy. Kansas, the prolific source of its influence and power, refuses longer to furnish capital for that party. The immediate admission of that young sister into the Confederacy by a Democratic Congress, demanded by every consideration of policy and duty, would constitute the most appropriate termination to the political drama in which she has been made to perform so conspicuous and unfortunate a part. But, sir, we are admonished that the Republican party is eminently anti-slavery in its character, and would not rest satisfied, were its procurement practicable, with a statutory prohibition of slavery in the Territories. It is grounded upon and upheld by the undying, uncompromising, and aggressive hatred of slavery; that spirit of fanaticism which menaces and opposes the institution wherever found, and by whatsoever sanctions maintained. I grant that there are many thousands of conservative freemen committed to that organization by party ties and affiliations who do not participate in its illiberality. They are carried along with the current.

The ulterior purposes of that party may be readily gathered from the startling announcements made by its distinguished leader, the Senator from New York. His programme of operations is entitled to serious consideration, and must go very far to commit his party in their favor. As early as March, 1853, that distinguished Senator, in an elaborate speech delivered in the other end of this Capitol, boldly announced the ultimate purposes of the new organization. I will quote at sufficient length to do justice to the Senator and his views:

"Free labor has at last apprehended its rights, its interests, its power, and its destiny, and is organizing itself to assume the government of the Republic. It will henceforth meet you boldly and resolutely here; it will meet you everywhere—in the Territories, and out of them—wherever you may go to extend slavery. It has driven you back in California and in Kansas; it will invade you soon in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, and Texas; it will meet you in Arizona, in Central America, and even in Cuba." \* \* \* "The interest of the white races demands the ultimate emancipation of all men. Whether that consummation shall be allowed to take effect with needful and wise precautions against sudden change and disaster, or to be hurried on by violence, is all that remains for you to decide."

Here we are informed that this free-labor organization is about to assume the government of the Republic; and that it will invade not only the border slaveholding States of the Union, but will boldly march into Central America, and even Cuba. At first glance, we can scarcely believe that this is measured language of a great Senator; but we are reminded that every word is carefully culled and weighed before he gives it utterance. But for what purpose is this Republican party to interfere with the slave States, and even invade Central America and Cuba? He tells us in the

next breath. He boldly avows it to be "the ultimate emancipation of all men."

But how is this emancipation to be accomplished? It has heretofore been considered an object of very remote, if not impossible accomplishment. The wisest and best men who have deplored the existence of slavery have seen that practical abolitionism would be ruinous to both races, and have found the subject so completely hedged round with difficulties, that they have invariably referred the time and means of its consummation to the secret councils of the Most High. But this bold expounder of Republicanism, nothing daunted by difficulties or dangers, presents the slaveholder with no alternative but emancipation, and that, if necessary, "hurried on by violence." Hurried on by violence! Great, indeed, is the enormity of the purpose thus coolly announced. Be it ever remembered that violent emancipation cannot be hurried on without company. As awful as its immediate ravages would undoubtedly be, others would follow in its flaming path. Not alone the blood of innocence, the smoking dwelling, the devastated plantation, the smoldering city; not alone the rule of lust and panic; the conflagration would be sated only in the ashes of empire. Mr. Chairman, it must be admitted that there is a growing indifference to treasonable efforts of this character. Twenty years ago such sentiments could only be uttered to be condemned. It is an alarming indication that the most treasonable teachings proceed from the highest authorities. Take the irrepressible conflict doctrine as a fair sample. The avowed author of that treasonable heresy has just been rewarded with the highest honors of his party, in the nomination for President at Chicago. Although Mr. Seward, in October, 1858, in his Rochester speech, fully avowed the doctrine, yet its paternity is traced to Mr. Lincoln, who had previously, in the Illinois canvass with Judge DOUGLAS, declared it as follows:

"In my opinion, it (the slavery agitation) will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States—old as well as new, North as well as South."

The New York Senator, adopting the same idea in his Rochester speech, declared that the two systems of labor peculiar to the different States were antagonistical, and that, as they came into closer contact, collision ensues. He then adds:

"Shall I tell you what this collision means? It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must, and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation. Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina, and the sugar plantations of Louisiana, will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans, become marts for legitimate merchandise alone, or else the rye fields and wheat fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be surrendered by their

farmers to the slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men. It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromise between the slave and free States, and it is the existence of this great fact that renders all such pretended compromises, when made, vain and ephemeral."

Happily, indeed, for America and the world, such treasonable heresies received no favor from the patriots of our revolutionary era. But our fathers having made so great a mistake, these leaders of the Republican party undertake the necessary correction. Their decree is, that the United States must, "sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation;" that the two systems of labor pursued in the different sections are incongruous and antagonistical; that "they never have permanently existed together in one country, and never can." Mr. Chairman, it is certainly a matter of great interest to this people to know, if the two systems of labor in the country are so antagonistical as to lead to conflict and collision—not an accidental, but an irrepressible conflict. The first great fact that strikes the mind is that, if such a collision is going on, the negro slave is and always has been unconscious of it. No agency of his will induce it. He asks no man's intervention. The comforts which the interests of both master and slave secure to him supply all his wants, and he is contented and happy. Right or wrong, this is notoriously true. The recent event at Harper's Ferry showed that not a single slave was willing to resort to force against his master, or even to aid white persons who ostentatiously paraded their willingness at the expense of their necks. The cause for an irrepressible conflict cannot be found with the master and slave. Do we find such cause in the free system? Where and in what manner does this antagonism disclose itself? If at all, it must be because these systems are mutually injurious. In other words, if there be a conflict, it is one of interest. The prosperity of either must be the detriment of the other.

But how stands the case? Slave labor is employed almost exclusively in the culture of cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco. Free labor, on the other hand, is employed chiefly in navigation, manufactures, and mining, and in raising live stock and provisions. This diversity of pursuits and productions is attributable, not only to the difference in the systems of labor, but to diversity of climate and soil and the overriding consideration of profit. The southern States, finding in the security and convenience of a common Government the most profitable employment in the culture of their great staples, have allowed the mighty interests of navigation and manufactures to grow up at the North, under the fostering care of the Federal Union. Is it not plain, that this very diversity of pursuits secures a mutuality of interest? Are not the people of the North, indeed every man, woman, and child, indebted to the South for their great staples of cotton and sugar? And are not the people of the South indebted to the North for manufactures and provisions and facilities of navigation? We



discover, then, no cause of conflict between the sections of this country, either on account of their different systems of labor or the variety of their productions. But it is manifest these various systems and interests are mutually beneficial. They are not rival and hostile, but are friendly and subsidiary. They are customers for each other. I can readily understand why rivalry and hostility may arise between persons pursuing the same avocation; I can understand how, in such a case, there may exist a conflict of interest, but I leave to my Republican friends the difficult task of vindicating their irrepressible-conflict doctrine.

But, sir, this doctrine is a libel on the history of the country. Our material progress has been unexampled. The development of the country in every direction is without a precedent; not only in the manufacturing interest of New England, nor in the countless wealth and blessings of the middle States, nor in the vigorous prosperity of the new and vast empires of the West, but, sir, in the far South, where voluntary white labor is impracticable—where the black-handed child of the sun has contributed his full share to the general welfare. He has reclaimed vast solitudes where his white brother scarce ventured to enter. The willing earth has blossomed under his stroke, and filled the lap of commerce with her choicest productions of plant and fibre. The shipping interest of the Northeast has carried them into every sea, and in every mart of the civilized world has proclaimed, "Cotton is king!" Statistics in this connection are interesting; but they fail to convey to the mind even an approach to accuracy of the vast extent in which the relation of buyer and seller pervades the two great sections of the country so much to their mutual advantage. Considered from any point of view, the teachings of Republicanism are purely demagogical, and unworthy of the age in which we live.

Mr. Chairman, it is quite apparent that the most serious mischief would result from conforming the political action of this Government to such views. Fatal, I fear, sir, would be the delusion that would thus mislead the people of this Union. But factious appeals, to be effective, must be disguised with fervent asseverations of devotion to the Confederacy. Here is our anchor in the darkest storm. The triumph of error and deception must be brief, and without the most criminal madness and folly can never reckon among its trophies the last days of the Federal Union. We cannot regard with too great disfavor the slightest circumstances that contribute to alienation and distrust. They have multiplied most fearfully within the past few years; and the general result is before us in a country torn by intestine factions and fired by sectional hatred. We are reminded by history that, in periods of great excitement, revolution and disaster are precipitated from apparently trifling causes. "'Tis the last ounce that breaks the camel's back." It is the last snow flake, lighter than a feather, that disengages the impending avalanche from its

icy hold, which, gathering as it rolls, buries hamlet and city in a common ruin.

Gentlemen may speculate about the right of secession, and indulge in visions of empire securely erected over the fragments of the Constitution; but the stubborn truth recurs. This incomparable system of government is not fragile, that it may be broken at pleasure; nor is it iron or adamant, that it may be crushed by physical power. It is an inviolable trust, committed to each passing generation for their enjoyment on the sacred condition that it shall be transmitted unimpaired to their latest posterity. It is a trust consecrated by the most imposing sanctions of history, which patriotism will execute at every peril.



